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and sobriety which characterise those who have long enjoyed the blessings of national liberty, morality, and pure religion? So far are the occasional excesses, which unhappily disfigured the revival of religion in the 16th century, from being any real reproach to it, that we unhesitatingly assert they are chargeable on the corruptions which degraded the mediæval system of Papal Rome. Every generation uttered against the licentiousness of the Reformation recoils with augmented force upon that Church which, by the intolerable scandals of which outraged humanity at length rose in arms.

So much in reference to the general charges brought against the Reformation, on the score of the heretical opinions and wild excesses of the Anabaptists and other fanatical sectaries. Let us now turn our attention to the special case of the leading Reformers themselves. The principles of the Reformation, it is argued, must be false, because Luther, Calvin, and the rest, were, individually, ungodly men. It is impossible to imagine that God would have permitted such men to be instrumental in reforming his Church, supposing it stood in need of reformation. The scriptural answer to this objection has been already virtually given in our last number. To what was there said we may now add, that the Old Testament furnishes us with a striking example of God's employing, for the reformation of his ancient Church, the agency of a man, who at the very time was committing a great sin, and continued to commit it as long as he lived. We allude to the case of Jehu. He destroyed the worshippers of Baal, and executed the divine vengeance on the house of Ahab. But he still upheld the idolatrous worship of the golden calves; that great abomination which is specially designated the sin of Jeroboam. The following words deserve our best attention, as bearing upon the point before us:—"And the Lord said to Jehu: Because thou hast diligently executed that which was right and pleasing in my eyes, and hast done to the house of Ahab according to all that was in my heart: thy children shall sit upon the throne of Israel to the fourth generation. But Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the Lord the God of Israel with all his heart; for he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam, who had made Israel to sin."—4 Kings x. 30, 31. No sin alleged against the Reformers is comparable for enormity to that which Jehu habitually practised. And yet he was a reformer chosen of God. By the special appointment of Jehovah he was anointed king over Israel.—4 Kings ix. 1—3.

But let us admit, as we said before, that the purity of the Protestant faith is vitiated by the supposed sinfulness of those who in the sixteenth century promulgated it. This amounts to a virtual recognition of the principle that sanctity of life is an essential note of a true Church. Let us, then, examine the result of this principle when applied to the Church of Rome, carefully bearing in mind that this Church boasts that she, and she alone, possesses one attribute of Deity—the attribute of infallibility. It is important also to remember that while (strange as it certainly is) there is no unanimity respecting the seat and organ of that asserted infallibility, the ultramontane Romanists claim it for the successor of St. Peter. The Pope, then, according to the universally received doctrine of the Church of Rome, is the organ of the faith of Christendom; and, according to the most influential party in that Church, he is the infallible organ. In his case, then, if anywhere, we should surely expect to find purity of life as well as purity of doctrine. If the character of the Reformed Churches must be identified with that of Luther and the other Reformers, who claimed no supernatural exemption from human weaknesses, much more must the character of the Church of Rome be involved in that of its infallible rulers. Any reasoning which would justify us in arguing from the unworthiness of the Reformers to the necessary worthlessness of the Reformation, will apply with tenfold force to the wickedness of Popes viewed in connection with the purity of the Church of Rome. Well, then, what do we learn from the inexorable records of Ecclesiastical History? As early as the fourth century Pope Marcellinus, if Pope Nicholas I. is to be believed, terrified, by the fear of death, apostatized from the faith, and sacrificed to heathen idols! The successor of St. Peter, the vicar of Christ, became—an idolater!* In the same century, somewhat later, Pope Liberius, weary of banishment, subscribed to the Arian heresy! The successor of St. Peter, the vicar of Christ, became—a heretic!† Poor Cranmer has been branded with every vile epithet that could be thought of, because, when threatened with an agonizing death, he, in a moment of weakness, was induced to renounce the reformed faith: an act which, almost immediately after, he bitterly lamented, and testified his abhorrence of at the stake, by the well-known action which even Voltaire has paragonized as being more intrepid and magnanimous than that of the ancient Roman. Cranmer's momentary apostasy furnishes rather a dangerous triumph to the advocates of the Church of Rome, so long as the cases of Popes Marcellinus and Liberius stand on record. Cranmer, under the fear of death, abandoned—he it so—the Protestant faith, professing still to be a Christian. Pope Marcellinus, under the same fear, abandoned his God, and sacrificed to idols. Cranmer, to avoid the lingering tortures of fire, subscribed a renunciation of the peculiar doctrines of the Reformation, retaining the com-

mon doctrines of Christianity. Pope Liberius, to escape the tedium of banishment, subscribed to the deadly heresy of Arianism. Passing over the cases of Pope Anastasius II. in the fifth century, and Pope Vigilius in the sixth, who have both been charged with heresy,* we next come to Pope Honorius, in the seventh century, who was condemned as a Monothelite heretic by the sixth and seventh general Councils,† and anathematized as such by at least two Popes—viz., Agatho and Leo II.‡ Leo's words are, "We anathematize also Honorius, who did not enlighten this apostolic church with the doctrine delivered by the Apostles, but attempted to subvert the undefiled faith by profane treachery."

The state of the Roman See during the tenth century, as described by Baronius, the great papal Annalist, is frightful to contemplate. In his preliminary observations to the tenth century, he writes thus:—"A new age begins, which, from its asperity and barrenness of good, has been usually called the iron age; from the deformity of its exuberant wickedness, the leaden age; and from its poverty of writers, the dark age. Standing on the threshold of which, we have deemed it necessary to premise something, lest the weak-minded should be at all scandalized if he sometimes should happen to behold the abomination of desolation standing in the temple. Scarcely can any one believe what unworthy, foul, execrable, and abominable things the sacred Apostolic See has been compelled to suffer. . . . Oh shame! Oh grief! how many monsters, horrible to be seen, were intruded into that seat which is to be revered even by angels! What tragedies were there enacted! With what filth was it her fate to be besmeared who was herself without spot or wrinkle! With what stench to be infected! With what loathsome impurities to be defiled, and by these to be blackened with eternal infamy!" And, again, "What was then the face of the Holy Roman Church! How unutterably foul! When harlots, at once most infamous and all-powerful, ruled at Rome; at whose will, Sees were changed, bishops presented, and—what is horrible to hear and utter—their paramours intruded into the chair of Peter." During that tenth century alone, thirty Pontiffs occupied the papal chair, each succeeding one, for the most part, surpassing, if possible, his predecessor in abominable crimes. The mind sickens in reviewing the enormities of these monsters of wickedness. John XII., to select one name from the revolting list, who ascended the papal throne in 956, was convicted by a Roman Synod, convened by the Emperor Otto the Great, of almost every enormity to be found in the catalogue of crime—blasphemy, perjury, profanation, impiety, sacrilege, simony, adultery, incest, murder.

Twenty years later, 974, came Boniface VII., whom Baronius brands as a murderer and a robber. One Roman historian, Cardinal Benno, tells us that in the interval between Pope Silvester II. and Gregory VII. (999–1073), five of the popes, including these two, were magicians. Platina, the biographer of the popes, goes farther, and says that magic was practised by all the popes from Silvester to Gregory. The heinousness of this practice must not be estimated by reference to our modern notions. It must be remembered that, in the ages under consideration, magic was universally regarded, even by those who practised it, as connected with satanic agency. Of Silvester, in particular, Platina informs us that, impelled by ambition and a diabolical lust of power, he obtained the pontifical dignity by the assistance of the devil, on the condition of doing homage to the evil spirit, and consigning his soul to everlasting perdition after death. Towards the close of the 15th century, Pope Sixtus IV. occupied the papal chair. He has been charged with unnatural crimes; and it is recorded that he devised a new mode of replenishing the sacred treasury—namely, the establishment of brothels in Rome! It would be superfluous to say a word about Pope Alexander VI. A Romish historian was obliged to combine three of the most atrocious monsters to be found in the annals of Pagan Rome, in order to obtain anything like a parallel to the enormities of Borgia. Nero, Caligula, and Heliogabalus, must be united in order to shadow forth the character of—if it may be said without impiety—this vicar of Christ. His successor, but one, Julius II., scarcely, if at all, fell short of his wickedness. Perjury, poisoning, assassination, drunkenness, unnatural crime, were laid to his charge. He was, moreover, a ferocious and merciless soldier. It was a saying of those times that the earth drank in more blood in a single day, shed through his means, than he himself, and his fellow-revellers, had drunk wine during his whole pontificate. This worthy successor of the Apostles is said, when once leading an army against his enemies, to have flung into the Tiber the keys of St. Peter, with the words—

Cum Petri nihil efficient ad proelia claves,
Auxilio Pauli forsitan evisis erit.

To conclude this dismal retrospect. Some of the infallible depositaries of the Roman Catholic faith were, we are informed by credible witnesses, unbelievers, and even Atheists! Pius Mirandula, who wrote towards the end of the 15th century, tells us of one Pope who, denying that

there was a God, confirmed this miserable impiety by the vile means through which he obtained possession of the papedom, and the equally execrable manner in which he conducted himself as Pope. The same author speaks of another Pope who, while living, declared to one of his friends that he did not believe in the immortality of the soul. But after his death he appeared to the same person, telling him that he had found, to his endless misery and torment, that the soul which he deemed to be perishable was immortal.*

It is with much reluctance that we sully our pages with particulars of this kind. From such revolting details every right-minded man instinctively recoils. To the Christian, jealous for the honour of his most holy faith, such abominations are a source of mingled indignation, shame, and sorrow; while to the infidel they furnish matter for a triumphant scoff, or a malignant sneer. We would willingly consign such dismal records of the past to the oblivion which is their fitting doom; and we would leave those wretched men who disgraced not only the name of Christian but our common humanity, to the judgment of Him whose honour they have impiously blasphemed, and whose eternal laws they have trodden under foot. But controversialists of the stamp of Mr. Keenan will not permit us to do so. They compel us to drag forth from their foul obscurity these deeds of darkness. When they brand the Reformers as heretics, because they dared to quit a communion in which, from the palace of the Vatican to the cell of the monastery, from the Pope to the mendicant friar, and thence through every fibre of the social and religious system, vice and immorality were practised and unblushingly avowed; and withal arrogate to that communion the august epithet of *holy*: when they cast in our teeth the invented crimes of a Luther, a Calvin, and a Cranmer, and exclaim in a tone of malicious triumph—"Behold the apostles of Protestantism! Can the religion be true which had such advocates?" we are obliged, when engaged with those who cannot or will not see the invalidity of such an inference, to retort the argument. And to do so, we are compelled to re-open the polluted pages of history—not our historians but their own—and point out to them there, scenes of iniquity perpetrated by the supreme rulers of a Church claiming to be exclusively holy and infallible, before which the vilest accusations which deadly hatred has been able to invent against the Reformers dwindle into utter insignificance.

Let any candid Roman Catholic, of plain common sense, peruse the history of the Popes, and then let him say whether he feels inclined to press the argument against the Reformation from the supposed unworthiness of the Reformers.

THE HEIR OF BALLYMANUS—No. III.

Not long after the meeting with Mr. Oldham, which we recorded in our last chapter, the time of Frank's stay in Rome expired, and he turned his steps homewards. His health and spirits had certainly profited by his travels, but we fear that he had not changed for the better in other respects. He was no longer the sincere and earnest inquirer after truth he once had been. What he had seen on the Continent had convinced him that the religion he there saw developed, contained more of human invention than of revelation from God; yet he sought for nothing purer or better. The disappointment in which his first anxious search for religious truth had ended, had a tendency to give him a distaste for such investigations; while again he was unconsciously influenced by the example of many whom he met abroad, who believed no more than himself, and yet who observed the conformity with the religion of their country, which prudence dictated, only avenging themselves for their compliance by many a bitter jest on it in private. Thus Frank, too, had fallen into a light and careless way of talking on religious subjects; he could enjoy a jest at the expense of the religion he professed; yet, if a serious attack were made on it (by his friend, Graham, for instance), he preferred to turn off the discourse by some sportive answer, rather than encounter the risk of becoming again a prey to those anxious doubts which had once so cruelly disturbed his repose.

When, however, he again set foot on English ground, many slumbering emotions were stirred up. During his year or two of absence, he thought he had taught himself to look calmly back on his acquaintance with Edith, as belonging to a chapter in his life now closed; and when he remembered the tumultuous passions which had then agitated him, it was with such feelings as those with which the traveller, who has escaped one of the fires which sweep over an American prairie, might survey the scene over which the flame had passed, while scarce yet composed from the agitation which he had undergone, and still not fearing that the charred and blackened soil around him could afford materials for such another conflagration. Now, however, as he drew near to London, the feelings which had filled his mind when he had been last there, naturally took possession of it again. While he was abroad, his correspondents had been able to tell him nothing of Edith; and now (useless though, he said to himself, it was to entertain any curiosity regarding one of whom he ought to think no more), he could not refrain from constant speculations—was she then in London? Was it possible he might meet her? How was it likely

* For Anastasius vid. Damas. Pontif. ap. Labbe. tom. v., c. 403, and for Vigilius vid. Liberat. Breviar., cap. 22. Galland. Bib. Pat. tom. xii. p. 156.

† Vid. Labbe, tom. vii., c. 977; tom. viii., c. 1305.

‡ Vid. Labbe, tom. vii., c. 660, 1156.

§ Baron. Ann. Eccles. Ann. 900

|| Ann. Eccles. Ann. 912.

* Platina. In Marcellin. p. 39.

† Athan. Ep. ad Solet., tom. i., 368. Hieronym. Chronicon. oper. tom. viii., c. 796.

* Pic. Mirand. de Fid. et Ord. Cred. Theor. 4.

she would behave if they did chance to meet? Had she forgotten him? Had it cost her as severe a struggle as it had done him, to think of each other with indifference? He acknowledged that it must be better for her peace of mind if she had succeeded in such an attempt, and yet much as he desired her welfare, he felt that it would give him only pain if he found, when he met her, that she had discovered this road to happiness.

On his return to his old quarters in London, he was cordially welcomed by his friend, Cornwall. Strange that two people who seemed to have such pleasure in seeing each other, should have borne their separation with so much equanimity, and that not a letter should have passed between them all the time Frank was away. Cornwall had now a hundred questions to ask him, and made him tell all the history of his travels and of his opinions; and Frank told all without reserve, having now himself fallen into the tone of sceptical indifference, which had, at first, shocked him in Cornwall. They had talked long that evening, when Frank became the questioner, and said, "I suppose it is useless to ask you if you can give me any intelligence of the Hartwells?"

"No," returned Cornwall; "you know that I have no opportunity of hearing anything of them. But, indeed, there is one thing which I fear you will be angry with me for not having told you before, and that is, that Mr. Hartwell himself called here to inquire for you about a month ago."

"Mr. Hartwell called here!" cried Frank, "you surely must mistake."

"Well," said Cornwall, "to speak accurately, an old gentleman called here, for he gave no name; but I opened the door for him myself, and having once seen him with you, and not forgetting faces easily, I know that it was he."

"Tell me all at once," cried Frank impatiently; "really, Cornwall, this was the first thing I should have heard from you on my coming."

"I have nothing to tell, man," returned Cornwall; "he asked for you, and I told him that you were travelling on the Continent. I asked him whether he wished to leave any message for you, though you know that I should have been puzzled to send it to you if he had, for you had not given me any address; however, he said that he had no message to leave, and went away."

"But," said Frank, "did you ask him no questions? did you not find out something for me about Miss Hartwell?"

"What could I ask him," said Cornwall; "he had not even told me his name. Was I to say, I know you are Mr. Hartwell; and I have been informed of all the history of the engagement between your daughter and Mr. MacManus; pray tell me something about her."

Frank did not exactly know what to answer, but he felt more cross and out of humour with Cornwall than he had ever felt in the whole course of their friendship before; nor did he care now to pursue the conversation with him, for he wanted to meditate on the news he had heard, and the more he thought of it the higher his spirits rose. That, after his intercourse with the family had been formally broken off, Mr. Hartwell should have himself taken a step to renew their acquaintance, was a fact of no ordinary significance. What could have been the cause? Had Edith's affection for him triumphed over all other considerations? or was it possible that, on reflection over the arguments with which he had assailed her religion, her views might have changed, and that a difference of religious profession need no longer separate them. Whatever were the origin of this overture, Frank was determined it should end in nothing but good; his ideas, as to the importance of religion, had so far declined in strength, that he condemned himself for having foolishly trifled away his happiness before, when he allowed such a matter to separate between them. Now he would be wiser; he would allow her to enjoy peaceably the religious sentiments which she found necessary to her happiness; she would no less make a good and affectionate wife to him; it was by no means essential that they should think exactly the same; and Mr. Hartwell's visit to him convinced him that he had still such an interest in her heart as would enable him to persuade her to take the same view of the case that he did. And, then, he returned to his former amusement of castle building; arranged in a thousand delightful ways, their meeting, and the welcome he was to receive; smoothed down every difficulty in one manner or another, and invariably conducted his little romance to the orthodox old-fashioned termination. After such agreeable meditations, when he met Cornwall next morning, all his little irritation had vanished, Cornwall himself making full atonement by putting the same favourable interpretation on Mr. Hartwell's visit; and Frank had only one thought to make him uneasy—the feeling, namely, that he could not, with propriety, go out that instant to call on the Hartwells. However, he wrote without delay to Mr. Hartwell, informing him of his return from the Continent, and saying that what he understood of Mr. Hartwell's having lately called on him, encouraged him to ask permission to wait upon the n. When he had sent his letter, Frank had great difficulty to restrain his impatience so as to wait quietly for the answer, and not, without further permission, take the well remembered road to Norwood. The answer came, however, as rapidly as could reasonably

have been expected, and was even more kind and affectionate in its tone than Frank had ventured to hope; but in other respects very unlike his anticipations. The news it contained was, in short, that Edith had suffered for some time from a heavy cold, which had resulted in inflammation of the lungs, and that there now were held out no expectations of her recovery. Mr. Hartwell explained that he had called on Frank at a time that Edith had expressed a wish to see him once more, but that she felt on consideration that his seeing her again would only give him needless pain, and, therefore, declined receiving his proposed visit. There were enclosed a few lines traced by Edith's own hand, in which she took as it were a solemn final leave of him. She reminded him how, in his arguments with her, he had asserted that whatever religion one might live in, the Roman Catholic was the only one so free from doubt and uncertainty, as to be able to afford firm support in the hour of death; and, she said, that she had wished to tell him that, now with the full prospect of eternity opening before her, she needed no other stay than the promises of God, which the Scriptures had made known to her, and which she had found fulfilled in her own experience. She had proved it was a God of truth who had spoken the words—"When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, and through the floods they shall not overflow thee." Knowing that it would be too painful to him to hear this from her own lips, she had written it to him; and she added, that having constantly prayed for his enlightenment, and for his being brought to a knowledge of the truth, she was convinced her prayers would be heard in God's own time. She concluded with fervent prayers for his temporal and eternal happiness. Frank scarce knew what he read; he felt the paper grow dim before his eyes; so sudden a change from dreams of fancied happiness to a reality of misery was almost more than he could bear. Notwithstanding the kind of refusal his proposal to call on the Hartwells had met with, he flew to their residence with all the speed he could command. On the way, he found it hard to believe the truth of the news he had heard; it was so difficult to connect the idea of death with that of one whom he had left so full of health, and life, and animation. The first sight, however, of Mr. Hartwell, was enough to bring home to him the reality of what he had been told; he looked so perceptibly older, and so bowed down with sorrow. Frank was admitted, without difficulty, to Edith's presence, and was more shocked at the sight of her than he had been at all prepared for. Her form was frightfully wasted away; her blooming complexion had faded, and was replaced by a ground of death-like paleness contrasted with two hectic spots on her cheeks, her strength had visibly departed, while an incessant cough seemed to banish all hope of her restoration to health. We cannot report what passed at this interview. Frank scarcely knew himself. It was, however, the first of several, as he continued in daily attendance on her. But before he had had time to recover from the stunning and bewildering effects of the shock he had received, he proved by experience the truth of the remark, that misfortunes never come single; for he had a letter from Ireland informing him of the alarming illness of his mother, and imploring him to hasten home without delay.

It was, perhaps, the only summons which would have drawn him from Edith's presence at such a crisis; but in obeying it, he had the consolation of having been told by Miss Hartwell's physician, that though his hopes of her ultimate recovery were but faint indeed, she had somewhat rallied, and nothing portended any very speedy termination of her illness. Accordingly, within an hour or two from the time of his having got the letter from home, he was on his road to Holyhead; and, travelling day and night, arrived at Ballymanus. His first eager inquiries were met by the reply, that his mother was still alive, but that this was all which could be said.

He flew to her apartment, but was met at the door by his weeping sisters, who told him that the parish priest and his curate were with her, and that their directions and his mother's own desire were, that the presence of her relatives was not to disturb the tranquillity of her dying moments. Frank disregarding what they said pushed into the room, and found his mother perfectly sensible; her dying features lighted up with a gleam of pleasure as he pressed to her embrace, and she murmured "God bless you Frank—thank God that I have seen you before I die." On Mr. O'Driscoll, however, expostulating warmly with Frank for touching one who had received the last rites of the church, his mother said, "Go Frank, I dare not think of anything earthly now;" and she turned her eyes from him to fix them on a large image of the Virgin and child, which had been placed full in her view, at the foot of the bed. Frank suffered himself to be led out of the room by one of the priests, while the other resumed at his mother's side the suggestion of holy thoughts to her mind. "I cheerfully accept all the pains which thou dost prepare for me in purgatory. It is just that fire should punish in me all the insults I have offered to thee. O, holy prison when shall I find myself shut up in thee, secure of never again being able to lose my God? O, holy fire when wilt thou purify me from so many stains, and render me worthy to enter the land of bliss. Mary, my hope, assist me; pray to Jesus for me; Mary, my mother, assist me at this moment. St. Joseph come to my aid. St. Michael the archangel defend me. My guardian angel assist me. O, Mary, my hope after Jesus, in thee I trust. In thee, O lady,

have I trusted, let me never be confounded."** Frank knelt by his sisters outside the door, holding in his scarcely conscious hands a book of devotions for the dying, which had been placed in them. He read what was necessary to be done for his mother's welfare, and he was assured everything was attended to. "First, during the agony, the dying should be frequently sprinkled with holy water; secondly, they should be frequently made to kiss the crucifix and an image of Mary; thirdly, they should endeavour to gain as many indulgences as possible, by the use of medals and scapulars; fourthly, it is necessary to suggest to the dying some sentiment of contrition, of resignation, of oblation of his pains to God, of confidence in the passion of Jesus Christ, and in the intercession of Mary; fifthly, the dying should frequently invoke the most holy names of Jesus and Mary, and should frequently repeat the prayer, "Mary, mother of grace, &c.; sixthly, during the agony, the persons who are present should frequently say the litany of the Blessed Virgin for the dying person." At length he heard the louder and louder tones with which Mr. O'Driscoll seemed to pursue the departing soul with the ejaculation "Jesus and Mary to you I give my heart and soul;" and in a moment more he was told that all was over.

When nature's grief had had its course, Mr. O'Driscoll, before leaving the house, wished to say some words to Frank of welcome home, and of comfort for his bereavement. But Frank could not listen to him, and cried "It was cruel of you to separate us from my mother." "It would have been more cruel to her had I permitted you to stay," returned Mr. O'Driscoll. There is nothing on which the blessed St. Liguori insists more than on the exclusion of relatives who might excite emotions in the dying person. What human soul, when taken without proper preparation from this world, is fit to meet its God? Good a woman as your mother was, she needed the preparation I was giving her. She had heard from my voice the pardon of the church. I had cleansed her in the last sacrament from all relics of sin; and it was my business, then, to see that no intrusion of worldly emotion should after that produce a thought which needed pardon." Frank's heart was too full to reply, and he turned away in silence. He passed, in a dreary kind of dull vacuity of thought, the interval between his mother's death and her funeral; his heart seemed chilled to stone, and he found it impossible to collect and fix his thoughts. His sisters, who had been deeply and violently affected at first, yet seemed to feel a different kind of grief from his. His father, again, who had been fondly attached to his wife, bore his loss with a silent dogged resolution, and directed everything with his usual self-possession. He seemed to derive little support from the consolations of religion, and once when Mr. O'Driscoll comforted him by the assurance that his wife would soon be in glory, he turned short away; but Frank heard him mutter, "I hope I have some better reason to think so than your saying so; you promised more than that last week to Tom Connor that was hanged for shooting the agent." Frank heard with satisfaction that, in conformity with his mother's last wishes, considerable sums were to be devoted to charitable objects, and that a large amount was to be expended in masses for the repose of her soul.

After the funeral, Frank, in spite of remonstrances, returned to London almost as rapidly as he had come. Never did he feel more in want of calm and quiet, yet it seemed fated that he was not to enjoy repose. In the carriage in which he sat were two other passengers, one, as it turned out, an Oxford convert to Romanism, the other a missionary employed by a society for the conversion of Roman Catholics; and the two engaged in a loud and angry controversial discussion. The Englishman seemed to take a peculiar pleasure in shocking the prejudices of his opponent, and in avowing his belief in everything which the other thought most monstrous and incredible; nor did the Irish gentleman betray any peculiar tenderness for the feelings of his antagonist. Of all the subjects which they might have chosen for discussion, they selected the one most painful to the feelings of Frank—namely, purgatory, and prayers for the dead; and Frank, though he sunk back in his seat and feigned sleep, was yet obliged to listen. The Oxford man when challenged to produce his proofs of purgatory, told with the gravest face, stories of holy monks who, passing by mount Etna, heard the wails and groans of the spirits there confined; he told of spirits who had appeared to their friends completely enveloped in flames, but who, after an interval, during which they had been prayed for by their friends, had been seen again with flames only reaching to the waist; then again only up to the knees, and so on to their complete liberation: with other tales of the same kind which, effectual as they had been in fastening the belief of purgatory on a dark and credulous age, showed strange in the light of the nineteenth century.

The missionary replied that he knew of but one purgatory—namely, the blood of Christ, which cleanseth from all sin; and he asserted, that Roman Catholic teachers do not believe themselves in the efficacy of the means of cleansing from sin, which they had invented. "First," said he, "you receive from the priest absolution from your sins; then, you purchase remission of them yourself, by

* Liguori's instructions and devotions for the dying, pp. 17, 27. Duffy's edition.

the performance of the penances he has appointed, and it may be by austerities of your own besides, and yet still you feel that you are not cleansed from your sins; you daily hear masses, and you believe that you have daily offered up, on your behalf, a repetition of that inestimable sacrifice which was once offered on Calvary; and yet your sins cleave to you still. Well, you purchase, perhaps, from the Pope himself, a full and plenary indulgence for the remission of all your sins, and yet you dare not think you are cleansed from your sins yet. Well, on your deathbed, you have your absolution repeated to you; you receive the sacrament of Extreme Unction, which is said to remove all relics of sin; one would think you had got rid of them now, but no, you have to enter into purgatory, there to endure torments the most intense in degree, continuing you know not how many thousand years; nor can your dearest friend know when he has said masses enough to get you out. Why, I should never have a moment's peace, if I believed in such a religion; if I had to look forward to such sufferings for myself, and if I believed that those of my friends who had departed this life in the Lord, were enduring them now. How I should work to get money! that would be the only consolation I should have; for yours is, indeed, the gospel for the rich. Woe unto you, poor, for you must work out your full time in purgatory. Blessed are you, rich, for you can pay money to get yourselves out of purgatory, and to help your friends out too. Why, sir, your priests themselves do not believe this doctrine. Do you think if they did, and if they had the feelings of men, they would not spend the greater part of their time, in saying masses for the benefit of the souls confined there, instead of waiting until they are paid money for doing so. Sir, money is at the bottom of the whole scheme; and a better engine for raising money never was devised. I remember hearing of a Presbyterian minister who was complaining to the parish priest, with whom he was on good terms, that he could get no money from his flock. 'Why don't you rent an acre of purgatory from me,' said the priest; 'you would find it bring in more than all your gospel sermons?'

To such a tirade as this the Englishman replied in equally unmeasured terms, concluding by recommending his opponent not to trouble his head about purgatory, for that he was sure of going further and faring worse; and denouncing to him, in the most positive manner, the infallible certainty of the eternal damnation of all those who were outside the pale of the true church.

"Purgatory," said he, "is a matter which you and your friends have nothing at all to do with."

Fortunately, just here, the train stopped, and Frank betook himself to another carriage, leaving the disputants to carry out the controversy between themselves, at their leisure.

From the miserable torpor into which Frank had fallen he was first roused by Edith herself. When next she saw him, ever regardless of herself, she seemed unconscious of the pain her own disease caused her, in her endeavour to comfort Frank for the loss he had sustained; while he found his heart melted by her warm and affectionate sympathy, he felt that he could now think and talk of his sorrows, as he poured his griefs without reserve into her bosom. But still, the more he felt her power to console him for the bereavement he had met with, the more hopeless was he of consolation under that which he feared he was destined to suffer; the deeper his sense of the value of her affection, the greater the pain with which he thought on the treasure which had been shown him, and seemingly placed within his grasp, only, as it appeared, to be snatched from him for ever. When he passionately expressed such feelings to her, she replied—

"I know, dearest Frank, how severely you have been tried, and I know it is only too probable that there may be another trial in store for you; but remember you are in the hands of a God who doth not afflict willingly. Believe me, your chastenings are sent with gracious purposes for your benefit; He knows how to bring good out of seeming evil. No chastening," she added, "for the present, seemeth to be joyful, but grievous; yet, afterwards it bringeth forth the peaceable fruits of righteousness in them who are exercised thereby."

Frank heard without believing, yet his levity on religious subjects had been banished; for he felt that there, if anywhere, was to be found consolation under the trials he was enduring. Yet, he felt no inclination to seek for comfort in the religion in which he had been brought up. It was not merely that such arguments as he had heard in the railway-carriage convinced him that her doctrine as to the state of the dead contained no real comfort for sorrowing friends; but ever since he had been on the Continent his faith in Romanism had received a wound which nothing could heal; the fabric, however slightly, he was convinced had no foundation, and could afford no solid consolation.

Still, he was not more satisfied with the kind of comfort which Cornwall could supply him.

"I cannot understand the mystery of existence," cried Frank to him, one evening, impatiently. "Without Christianity I see no grounds for looking forward to a future state; and yet, without such a state what a mystery are the sufferings of this life! As for my own trials, severe as they are, I dare not say I do not deserve them. But look at the Hartwells; there is a man whose whole life has been spent in acts of most munificent benevolence, and who deserves to be happy as much as any man, and

yet, see how his whole happiness has been wrecked, and the object on which he centered all his affections likely to be torn from him. And poor Edith herself, if ever there was an angel of goodness upon this miserable earth, she is one; whose whole happiness seems to consist in adding to the happiness of others, and yet, how much she has suffered! If she endured in our separation the tenth part of what I had to bear, it was enough to destroy her peace of mind; and now I fear she is likely, after much bodily suffering, to be removed from this world without tasting any of its enjoyments. Cornwall, do these things admit of any explanation on your system?"

Cornwall was, at first, reluctant to answer this appeal, but, on being pressed by Frank, at length replied—

"The matter admits of a very simple explanation, though I cannot promise that you will find it satisfactory. The world is governed by general laws, and we have no right to expect those laws to be suspended because their operation in particular cases may be painful to us. In a country where pulmonary diseases carry off so many per cent. of the population, I do not see that the case of an individual being so carried off is one which requires explanation; nor does the matter become more difficult even though she be very beautiful, or very amiable, or though her father be very munificent, or though she be tenderly beloved by you, since these are all circumstances which do not at all affect the matter."

Frank winced a little at this explanation, but replied— "It is in the existence of these general rules that I find my difficulty. Why is it that no piety or virtue can stay the ravages of the destroyer? Is it not necessary to believe that they whose share of happiness in this world is so much less than that of others who far less deserve it, shall receive some compensation in a future state of existence?"

"That is a very pretty theory," replied Cornwall, "but where is the proof?"

Frank could not deny the force of this question; and it was one which fastened itself on his mind. He was conscious that this subject of "proofs" was one to which he had given no attention at all. As he had at first believed all the doctrines of the church in which he had been brought up without troubling her for proofs, so, when he became convinced that that church was not a trustworthy guide, he rejected all her doctrines indiscriminately; but now the importance which he felt belonged to the subject urged him to sift the matter more closely, and to examine which of her doctrines could be proved, and which not. He began to study books on evidences, and thoroughly examined the reasons which the advocates of Christianity had offered for their belief. In these investigations he met with much help from Mr. Peterson, of whom his opinion had considerably altered since their last meeting. Then he was prejudiced against him as a hot, and not very successful controversialist; now, from constantly meeting him, in attendance on Edith, he had come to know him as a kind and sympathising friend. And, after some time spent in these inquiries, Frank began to find rest for the sole of his foot. He came to see that there was no reason to doubt the veracity of Peter, or to disbelieve the facts to which he bore testimony, whatever fables may have been countenanced by Peter's alleged successors; that, even though a purgatory could be shown to be a vain imagination, heaven and hell would remain substantial realities; that there was reason to believe in the efficacy of prayers offered through Christ, however little ground there might be for hoping for an answer to those addressed to the Virgin Mary, or to St. Philomena. Frank's progress in religious convictions was rapid; the pressure of the trials to which he had been subjected made him as it were live fast; while he was, no doubt, unconsciously influenced by the faith manifested by Edith herself; so calm, so intelligent, so triumphant, that Frank felt it more and more impossible to doubt the reality of that of which she seemed to have so distinct a perception. It was only after the greater part of his scepticism had been thus banished, that he found courage to avow to Edith, what the exact nature of his religious difficulties had been, and that while she had supposed he was erroneously believing too much, in reality he was believing too little. He told her, too, how one of the arguments which had led to his change of opinions, had been the thought how far below her deserts was the portion of happiness which she herself seemed destined to enjoy in this world; and that, therefore, some compensation must be in store for her.

Edith replied, that she hoped he had been influenced by some better arguments; for my own experience is, she said, that even were there no other life I must own that I have been in this world far happier than I deserved; why I have never formed a wish that my father was not anxious to anticipate and to gratify; and as for the disquietude you say you have caused me, do you think, Frank, I wish that I had not known you? Whatever sorrows our acquaintance may have caused me, I could not change even those sorrows for many of this world's pleasures. And, on the other hand (she pursued), I cannot tell you what comfort your presence with me these last few weeks has given me; I own that when I thought how desolate my poor father would feel without me, I had felt it hard to submit to God's chastening hand, to feel that He doth all things well. But now, since I have seen how my illness has been blessed to you, and how it may be the means of bringing you to live closer to God, I feel overpowered

by a sense of His goodness in forgiving my rebellious thoughts, and condescending to let me see part of the reason for His dispensations. I know there may be other gracious purposes which I know not of, and I feel that I can trust to Him for all things. I can trust my whole soul to Him who died for it, and I can trust those I leave behind to Him. If He smiteth He also can bind up, and His hands can heal.

It was but a week after this that, on Mr. Peterson's arranging to administer the Lord's Supper to Edith, on the following day, she had the exquisite gratification of hearing Frank ask whether he might venture to join with them. He expressed a sense of great ignorance, and feared he was unworthy of that holy rite. Yet Mr. Peterson did not repel him, as to his acknowledgments of sin he joined a desire to forsake it, and professed sincere faith in Jesus as his only mediator.

Edith had not, for a long time, appeared so well as on the evening of this day, her spirits were higher, and she seemed filled with a serene and holy joy. Frank, finding the improvement continue for a day or two, began to indulge hopes of the possibility of a rally; so much the greater was the shock three days afterwards, when coming to the house early, he perceived, at the first aspect of the servant who admitted him, that he had come to a house of mourning. Long as he had been preparing for this event it fell upon him now with all the suddenness of an unexpected calamity; nor was he, for some time, able to inquire the particulars of what had taken place. When he could ask for further information, he was told that Edith had retired to rest the night before seemingly as well as she had been for some time previously; the attendant, who lay in the room with her, had slept for a couple of hours, when she heard her mistress call; she rose, but could be of no assistance; there were a few inarticulate sounds, a few faint struggles, and Edith had entered into peace. It need not be told how acutely Frank felt this failure of his hopes of earthly happiness; yet, though the blow was severer than any he yet had suffered, it seemed as if there were no poison in the wound; his grief was without bitterness, while, no doubt, he was supported himself by the efforts he made to support and comfort Mr. Hartwell. There was a time when he would have been shocked and distressed at what he would have thought the unprepared manner of Edith's death; yet now he felt how far surer was the confidence which could be felt in the case of one whose life had been one of communion with God, and constant readiness to enter his presence, than any which would be derived from all the preparation which could be made when the speedy approach of death was announced. And he involuntarily contrasted the death of Edith with the last moments of his mother. As for the latter, while he trusted that her soul was saved through her sincere faith in Christ, imperfect as was her knowledge of him, he yet grieved to think how her faith had been clouded, and her dying moments disquieted through a want of knowledge of the complete efficacy of his sacrifice. Her deathbed was haunted by a sense of sin unatoned for; and charms were sought in vain, to drive the spectre away—holy water, and blessed medals, and scapulars, and indulgences, and crucifixes, and cries to her guardian angel, and to the Blessed Virgin, and to the other saints; still the inexorable justice of God appeared unsatisfied, and threatened to lead her off to regions of torment less dreadful than hell, only because hope was not banished from them. Contrasted with this scene of superstitious gloom how bright appeared the light which shone round Edith's parting days. Deep as was her conviction of sin, no less firm was her faith that for her sins Christ had, by his one oblation of himself, made a full, perfect, and sufficient atonement; the knowledge of this banished all her doubts and fears, and enabled her to echo the apostle's language—"I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day."

With bleeding heart Frank followed to the grave these remains which were, as it were, the shattered casket where he had vainly stored his treasures of earthly happiness. It was deeply painful to him to be present at that scene, yet, it would have been more painful to him to have remained away; he felt a choking sensation, when the words were read—earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, as he heard the dull sound of the falling clay separate for ever in this life between him and his beloved; yet, his ears drank in the words of peace and hope, from the solemn service then heard for the first time. He had read indeed, before, the lesson (1 Cor. xv.), yet never till then, did he feel the full force of the apostle's argument, which binds in indissoluble connection the resurrection of Jesus and that of his people; which assured him that our Lord was but the first fruits of them that slept, and that as surely as Jesus was raised up from the dead, so surely, them which sleep in Jesus, God will bring with him. When he turned away still there lingered about his ears, like a strain of sweet music, those accents which spoke of the "sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life," which forbade us to be sorry, as men without hope, for them which sleep in Jesus; still he seemed to hear the voice which said, "blessed are the dead, which die in the Lord, even so saith the spirit, for they rest from their labours." And ere he had left the cemetery he had forced his lips to utter, and taught his heart, in some measure, to feel, "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord."